

it up if you tried. We took low unemployment and high growth and low inflation for granted. And I was one of those bright-eyed idealistic kids that felt just that way.

Two years later we had riots in the streets. Four years later, when I graduated from Georgetown, it was 9 weeks after President Johnson said he couldn't run for President again because the country was so divided over Vietnam, 8 weeks after Martin Luther King was killed in Memphis, 2 days after Senator Kennedy was killed in Los Angeles. The next election had a different outcome. Within a few months, the previous longest economic expansion in history itself was history.

What's the point of all this? I don't know when we'll ever have a time like this again, where we have so much economic prosperity and all the social indicators from crime to welfare to teen pregnancy, you name it, they're all going in the right direction; where our country is in a position to be a force for peace and freedom and decency from the Middle East to Northern Ireland to the Balkans to Africa and Latin America; where we have the chance to build the future of our dreams for our children and protect the fundamental essence of American citizenship and constitutional liberty, even as we build a more united community amidst all of our diversity.

And I'm old enough now to know that nothing stays the same, and things change. And I say this to you more as a citizen than as a President, because I'm not a candidate this year. But I think it is profoundly important that the American people make up their mind what to do with this moment—this magic moment in our history. And I think we will not ever forgive ourselves if we let it get away from us.

In 1964, when LBJ came here, we let it get away from us. But the problems were deep and imponderable and difficult to move away from—the problem of Vietnam and the problem of civil rights. We are not burdened to the extent

that time was by anything of that magnitude. But we know what's coming down the pike. We know we have to deal with the retirement of the baby boomers. We know we're not giving every kid in this country a world-class education. We know that we have not done what we should do in terms of safe streets and health care. We know we're going to have to deal with the problems of climate change. We know this explosion in biotechnology that the human genome project exemplifies will change things forever and require us to rethink our whole notion of health and retirement. We know that we have responsibilities to people around the world if we want Americans to do as well as they can at home.

And at the core of it all is, what is our fundamental notion about what it means to be a citizen of this country, to have rights in the courts and on the streets and in our daily lives?—yes, but also to have responsibilities to one another and to our country and to the future.

I want you all to think about that. I've done everything I knew to turn this country around, to try to get things going in the right direction. And now all the great stuff is still out there just waiting for us to build a future of our dreams for our kids. That's all that matters, not the politics, not the injuries, not the hurts, not the barbs, not the bragging, not the plaudits.

There's an old Italian proverb that says, "After the game, the king and the pawn go back into the same box." It's well to remember. All we really have is our common humanity. But once in a great long while, we get an unbelievable opportunity to make the most of it. You've got it now, and I hope you will.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:25 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Richard H. Middleton, Jr., president, and Fred Baron, president-elect, Association of Trial Lawyers of America; and Gov. Mel Carnahan of Missouri.

## **Statement on the Gun Buyback Initiative** *July 30, 2000*

I am pleased that Secretary Cuomo and the Department of Housing and Urban Develop-

ment (HUD) are moving forward with their successful gun buyback initiative. By teaming up

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law enforcement, local authorities, and citizens in the fight to reduce gun violence, the HUD gun buyback program has already helped remove over 17,000 guns from our communities. Today's announcement that BuyBack America will continue will ensure the removal of thousands more guns, preventing an untold number of gun accidents, suicides, and crimes. Despite HUD's clear authority to carry out this important program, the gun lobby and other opponents of commonsense gun safety measures continue to challenge this initiative. We remain committed to carrying out BuyBack America, and I call on HUD to continue to offer this vital assistance to communities seeking our support in addressing their local gun violence problems.

HUD's gun buybacks are an important part of my administration's comprehensive strategy to reduce gun violence in America. While we are making progress in this fight, gun violence remains far too high. Congress can do its part by finally passing the stalled commonsense gun safety legislation to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children and fully funding my \$280 million gun enforcement initiative to crack down on gun criminals. Congress should put the public safety interests of American families above those of the gun lobby and support these efforts instead of working to undermine them. If we work together, we can continue to bring down gun crime, reduce gun violence, and save lives.

## Remarks in Tampa, Florida, on Permanent Normal Trade Relations With China

*July 31, 2000*

Thank you very much. First of all, let me say that I'm delighted to be back in Florida. I'm glad to be here with Jim Davis and my longtime friends Bill Nelson and Buddy MacKay, who is doing a wonderful job for the United States as our Special Envoy to the Americas. And he did spearhead the passage in the Congress earlier this year the Caribbean Basin trade initiative, which is one of the most important things Congress has done this year. It is something I know that will be of special benefit to Florida.

I want to just say a few words about this China issue. First of all, it is part of an overall strategy we have followed for almost 8 years now. When I became President, it was obvious to me that to turn the economy around, we had to do three things: we had to get rid of the deficit and get interest rates down and get investments up; we had to invest in the new technologies of the future and in the educational capacity of our people and to create a whole network of lifetime learning in America; and we had to expand trade.

Whether we like it or not, the economy of every country will become increasingly global, and we have to be in a position to take advantage of it. A lot of people who don't agree

with my position say that, well, we've still got a big trade deficit. That's true. And the reason we do is because our economy has grown so much more rapidly than that of our major trading partners. A 5-year economic slowdown in Japan has contributed to our trade deficit. The collapse of the other Asian economies for a couple of years, and the problems that Russia had, all contributed to our trade deficit.

But if you look to the long-term future, America has got—if we want to make things, we've got to sell them to somebody. We have 4 percent of the world's population and 22 percent of the world's income. So it's not rocket science to figure out that if you're going to produce this much wealth, you've got to sell it to somebody.

And so I believe that—we have now about 300 trade agreements we've negotiated over 8 years under the leadership of Charlene Barshefsky and, before her, Mickey Kantor. I think they've done a great job, and as I said, Buddy MacKay has done a great job. We have enjoyed strong support in a bipartisan fashion from the Florida legislative delegation, and Senator Graham in particular has been very helpful, and I'm grateful for that.